

because the agent has obligated that principal by oath to support it. And not only the principal itself, but all its officers, all the creatures of its government are under obligation of oath to support the agent. It is true, they are to support it in the exercise of its constitutional powers. But if it had no sovereignty it could have no constitutional powers to exercise, being a mere agent, the constitutional power would necessarily reside in the principal.

Now, what are other attributes of sovereignty? Will the State of Virginia contend that it has the right under the Constitution to enter into and form alliances with foreign nations? Will it contend that it has a right to enter into a treaty of peace with foreign nations? to emit bills of credit? to coin money? or to exercise any of those ordinary attributes which belong to a sovereign power? On the contrary, has it not surrendered the right to do so to this very *metaphysical entity*, which gentlemen here allege they have created and baptized as a mere agency?

Sir, whence is all the prestige of this country derived? How became we a member of the great family of nations? Did anybody ever hear abroad of the State of South Carolina, in its independent, sovereign capacity, as forming that nation which clothed us with so much prestige and so much renown? Did any government upon the face of the earth ever care for, consider, know, or recognize any of these States of which you speak as sovereigns, in their dealings and intercourse by treaties with this country? The United States of America is an entity, as distinctly defined and known, and with as much precision as a mathematical problem or proposition; it is known as a nation, and a great nation. It is described as such and with a power and vigor of language, with a force and grandeur of eloquence and moral sublimity, which has never been surpassed, in a speech with which all are familiar, made against the heresy of secession during its agitation in Georgia, by no less a person than the present-so-called Vice-President of the so-called Southern Confederacy. It is a nation which, as such, has given to you all the glory you possess. Created, it is true, as my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Berry) has said, by the States.

It is true the States existed before the Constitution, but they never could have made the Constitution except by the surrender of the sovereignty which my friend calls the exclusive prerogative of the States. They never could have created a nation, which should occupy a position among the family of nations, but by the surrender of their sovereignty—except perhaps one that would have been held up by foreign nations to ridicule and mockery, as a government claiming to act as a nation, with the powers and prerogatives of sovereignty, when in point of fact it

was merely a shadow. Do you suppose any nation upon the face of the earth would deal with an agent, though claiming to be one of the family of nations of the earth—that any nation would enter into treaties of alliance and commerce with a mere agent? No, that does not belong to any theory of diplomacy which we have yet learned. The nations of the earth deal with principals only, like themselves, not with agents.

But my friend, (Mr. Berry, of Prince George's,) has said that evidence of this State sovereignty is found in the fact that the independence of these States as States was recognized in the treaty with Great Britain; that in point of fact, "The United States" so-called, in the Articles of Confederation, was ignored; that the parties to that treaty were the several States in their individual capacity, and that the Government of the United States, in its entity, not metaphysical, but real and substantial, was ignored. Now, I cannot say anything better on that subject than is said in a newspaper which I hold in my hand, and which I quote and make part of my argument. It so happens that Mr. Jefferson Davis uttered just such a sentiment a few weeks ago, in an address made by him to the Confederate Congress, and when I heard the same sentiments gravely uttered here, it almost seemed to me that by some extraordinary means I had been transplanted into the Confederate Congress. I do not mean to say that the honorable gentleman borrowed his argument from this source, but there is a remarkable coincidence between the two.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I never saw the message.

Mr. RIDGELY. In his message of the 2d of May last, Mr. Davis speaks of the States in rebellion as "States whose separate and independent sovereignty was recognized by treaty with France and England in the last century, and remained unquestioned for nearly three generations." Now the commentator upon this declaration uses these words, which I will read to the Convention, and adopt as my reply to that position:

"Mr. Davis has not descended to name the treaties by which France and England, nearly ninety years ago, recognized the separate and independent sovereignty of the several States. As is well known, there were no treaties negotiated by those powers with the United States or any of them three generations ago, but the treaties of alliance and commerce in 1778 with France, and of independence with England in 1782 and 1783. Neither of these treaties was negotiated by or on behalf of the separate States, or any of them, nor is there in either of them the slightest recognition of their separate independence. The only possible foundation for Mr. Davis's strange statement is, that the States are mentioned by their names in those treaties.